

A --This specification includes a computer program listing appendix consisting of Appendices A, B, C and D, which are stored on CD-ROM as the following files, respectively: Appendix_A.txt (13.4 Kbytes), Appendix_B.txt (17.2 Kbytes), Appendix_C.txt (8.16 Kbytes), and Appendix_D.txt (15.2 Kbytes), all created on August 22, 2001. These files, which are incorporated herein by reference, contain a partial source code listing of one aspect of a preferred embodiment of the invention. The copyright owner has no objection to the reproduction of this code listing as part of this patent document, but reserves all other copyrights whatsoever.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please rewrite Claim 19 as follows:

A² 19. (Amended) The search engine system as in Claim 18, further comprising a component that determines the item popularity levels based on at least one of the following types of user activity: (i) selecting an item from a list of search results, (ii) placing an item in a shopping cart, and (iii) purchasing an item.

Please add the following new claims:

22. A method of processing a search query specified by a user of an electronic catalog of items, the method comprising:

identifying catalog items that are responsive to the query, including catalog items from multiple categories;

A³ determining an order in which to present the multiple categories to the user such that the order is dependent upon popularity levels of responsive catalog items among a plurality of users of the electronic catalog; and

outputting the multiple categories in said order, together with corresponding catalog items that are responsive to the search query, for presentation to the user.

23. The method as in Claim 22, wherein the popularity levels are determined based on an automated analysis of browsing activities of the plurality of users of the electronic catalog.

24. The method as in Claim 22, further comprising, prior to processing the search query, analyzing browsing activities of the plurality of users of the electronic catalog to determine the popularity levels of items in the catalog.

25. The method as in Claim 24, wherein analyzing browsing activities comprises determining the popularity levels based on a current set of user activity data, such that the popularity levels reflect current interests of users.

26. The method as in Claim 22, wherein outputting the multiple categories to the user in said order comprises generating a display in which the multiple categories are displayed in said order.

27. The method as in Claim 22, wherein the order is determined based further upon a profile of the user.

28. A web page generated according to the method of Claim 22.

29. A method of facilitating searches for items within an electronic catalog in which items are arranged within categories, the method comprising:

monitoring actions performed by a plurality of users with respect to items in the electronic catalog, and based on such actions, determining popularity levels of items in the catalog;

receiving a search query specified by a user, and identifying a set of items in the electronic catalog that are responsive to the search query ("responsive items"), including items from multiple categories; and

selecting an order in which to present the multiple categories to the user such that the order is dependent upon the popularity levels of the responsive items.

30. The method as in Claim 29, wherein the order is selected based further upon a profile of the user.

31. The method as in Claim 29, wherein the order is selected based further upon a number of responsive items falling within each of the multiple categories.

32. The method as in Claim 29, further comprising generating a web page in which at least some of the responsive items are displayed to the user arranged by category in said order.